Christina Lassalle

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Change Process at Van Bokkelen Elementary

When I started teaching at Van Bokkelen Elementary School in 2006 each teacher had 1 or 2 computers in their room and used the computer lab once a week for 45 minutes. There was one projector and a laptop cart at which teachers needed to sign it out with the technology coordinator. My principal at the time chose to use our Title 1 money to fund staffing rather than technology. One of Ely’s 8 conditions of successful change was seriously lacking, commitment from administration. Since 2006 and a new principal in place, the importance of technology has changed.

On the first day of work my brand new principal announced that he was going to find a way to get Smart boards. I jumped for joy while the rest of the staff looked at me with confusion. Including myself, maybe 5 out of 60 staff members knew what Smart boards were. My principal sent out an email to find out who had gone to a staff development workshop for Smart boards offered through the county, the 5 of us replied with excitement. We were dissatisfied with our school’s priority on technology and felt as having a Smart board would enhance a new math program. After my principal made his priorities, Title 1 money was used to put Smart boards, projectors, and document cameras in classrooms. However, the Title 1 coordinator did not distribute the Smart boards to all the staff members who took the training but rather to people I believe she liked better. This new technology was now an issue because people who were ready for a change would not be able to accept this change and those who received the Smart board without any training or knowledge felt uneasy. In grade levels first through fifth, at least one teacher had a Smart board. In my grade level, three out of four teachers received a Smart board. Out of that three who received the new technology, I was the only one who had training.

According to ACOT’s 5 stages, receiving the Smart board at the entry stage was a bit overwhelming because it not only changed the arrangement of the classroom but changed curriculum planning as a teacher. Teachers who did not have information about the Smart board needed another teacher to help them into the entry level. My teammate B, took 3 weeks to get the Smart board up and running even with a co-teacher who was a little more comfortable with the change. Thankfully, teachers who were comfortable with the technology were able to educate those who had it. To be able to get the staff to begin the entry stage, Ely’s second condition, knowledge was essential for the “buy in.” Unfortunately an official school wide staff development for the Smart board didn’t occur until May which was 4 months after the distribution.

Once teachers picked up on how beneficial the Smart board is to instruction after the staff development, cultural arts teachers as well as teachers who did not have a Smart board expressed dissatisfaction. Change was not successful for these instructors because there weren’t enough resources available. Currently, this is still a problem especially when teams lesson plan. A fourth grade teacher expressed to me that she has a Smartboard but her teammates have document cameras and when planning it makes it difficult because they will one copy of a paper but she would have to go out of her way to scan it, find it online, or type it in the Smart board. For the teachers who had the Smart board by May they had begun reaching the adoption stage. However, for most the Smart board was just a fancy chalkboard. On the other hand, teachers who had the background knowledge to begin with were at the adaption stage and begun finding and using resources on the web to enhance the curriculum. I was able to share the resources with my team and most of them were comfortable to use it.

I spoke with the teachers who received Smart Boards last year with previous training to discuss how they are doing. One of the fourth grade teachers said that she used the Smart board for everything and would go online and find lessons but wished she had more time to make lessons. I agreed with her because I felt as if we both were ready for the final ACOT step, invention but needed time to make that change successful.

Next I spoke with a first grade teacher who was unsure about having a Smart board but luckily co teaches with a special educator who is at ACOT’s appropriate stage and can find resources and use tools to fit the curriculum. Without someone else pushing her to change, she uses the Smart board as a fancy chalkboard. I began to feel more concerned about how some of my coworkers may still be at the adoption stage after a year with Smart boards.

My principal’s commitment to technology was put into question when I approached him about professional development opportunities I could offer as an e-coach at the beginning of the year. His reaction to my idea of using 15 minutes of a staff development meeting giving an overview of technology left a bad taste in my mouth. I hope that after MSA that I will be able to be accepted as a leader for technology and begin to spend time with my staff on educating them and meeting their needs. We are like students and need much differentiation. Also, I hope that down the road Smart boards are given to each member in the grade level so that planning is more cohesive.

References

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